

SACRED DANCE GUILD NEWSLETTER

MARCH 1961

EDITORS: MRS. CHARLOTTE WRIGHT
MRS. JOYCE REED

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MEMORANDA FROM OUR PRESIDENT

As I think about our group, I am wondering whether or not we are neglecting the art of communication, i.e. the writing and sharing of ideas with others. The "Newsletter" ("Bless it") is very helpful since it can stimulate thought, which in turn should produce action. But, we must not rely completely on the "Newsletter".

No doubt, you have heard the phrase, "you must put something of yourself into whatever you are doing in order to get something from it". This is essential. However, I feel that we might consider more often what we put in and that we do contribute, forgetting the latter part of the phrase.

Do you wonder why workshops or festivals are held at certain places? It is very simple....when we are invited to hold a workshop at a specific church, we do it at the time requested. The same is true of festivals. If you would like the Sacred Dance Guild to come to your church, please write us.

What hymns do you start with in your choir? Please send a card with a list on it to the President or Vice President. Then, we can share this information with others who would appreciate suggestions.

REMEMBER

MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN:

MISS HAZEL BAILEY
74 SEA AVENUE
QUINCY, MASS.

DUES: \$2.00

STUDENT MEMBERS
HIGH SCHOOL OR COLLEGE

DUES: \$1.00

MEMORANDA FROM OUR PRESIDENT (CONT)

The Executive Board met in historic John Street Methodist Church on February 21, 1961. Jane Chamberlain was our hostess. We discussed at length: "Newsletters", Workshops, Jacob's Pillow and Festivals. We endeavored to find ways to set up our program so as to meet the needs of all our members.

REPORT ON THE ANNUAL MEETING BY RUTH R. RAYTON

The annual meeting of the Sacred Dance Guild was held February 21 at John Street Methodist Church in New York City. According to the Treasurer, our balance as of February 1, 1961 was \$515.11.

The various committees including Publicity, Program, Membership, Recording Secretary, Corresponding Secretary, Directors and the President presented brief reports.

Special reports included:

1. Plans for Jacob's Pillow
2. The Dance Consultation (of Nov) by Margaret Fisk Taylor
3. The report of the Nominating Committee which follows:

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT BY MARGARET FISK TAYLOR, JOSEPHINE RICE AND
BEATRICE C. JENKINS, CHAIRMAN

The Nominating Committee of the Sacred Dance Guild presented the following slate of officers at the annual meeting, February 21 in New York City:

President:	Mrs. Ruth Rayton - 13 E. South St., Hanover, N. H.
Vice President:	Mrs. Mary Jane Wolbers - 6 Excelsior Ave., New Paltz, N. Y.
Treasurer:	Mrs. Josephine Rice - 117 Sewall Woods Rd., Melrose, Mass.
Recording Sec'y.:	Mrs. Elizabeth Chenell - 243 South St., Concord, N. H.
Corres. Sec'y.:	Mrs. Janet Walz - 132 Berthoud St., Park Ridge, N. J.
Program Chairman:	Rev. Robert Storer - 33 Glen Green, Winchester, Mass.
Membership:	Miss Hazel Bailey - 74 Sea Ave., Quincy, Mass.
Newsletter:(Spring)	Mrs. Martha Odom - 207 Middlesex St., Springfield, Mass.
(Fall)	Mrs. Lura Ellsworth - Sound View Hts., Indian Neck, Brandford, Conn.
(Winter)	Mrs. Martha Frizzell - Charleston, N. H.
Publicity:	National Mary Jane Wolbers - 6 Excelsior Ave., New Paltz, N. Y.
	N. H., Me., Vt.: Rev. James Buell - 49 Lebanon St., Hanover, N. H.
Mass:	Miss Dorothy Greed - 23 Rock View Rd., Milton 87, Mass.
Conn.:	Mrs. Betty Simpson - 105 Chestnut St., Manchester, Conn.
N. J.:	Rosanna Smith - 73 Hoover Ave., Bloomsfield, N. J.
Directors:	Mrs. Margaret Fisk Taylor - 2122 California Ave. N.W., Washington
	Mrs. Helen Borngessor - 239 Concord Ave., Lexington, Mass.
	Mrs. Jane Renz - 5 Robinhood Rd., Winchester, Mass.
	Mrs. Ruby Henderson - 831 Columbus Ave., Boston 20, Mass.
	Mrs. Meredith Herrick - Woodbury Union Church, Conimicut, R. I.
	Mrs. Mabel Hart - 432 Silver Lane, Billings, Montana

A N N O U N C I N G

MAY FESTIVAL

The May Festival of the Sacred Dance Guild will be held in the Second Congregational Church of Holyoke, Mass. on May 6. The program will be as follows:

1 pm - 2 pm: Registration and get Acquainted
2 pm: Workshops

First Leader: We hope for Margaret Fisk Taylor
Second Leader: Janet Knight, Dance Teacher and former
Choir Director in Springfield, Mass.

5:15 pm: Buffet Supper: \$.99
7:30 pm: Worship Service

Registrations should be sent to:

MRS. JOHN SMITH, CHAIRMAN
20 MAGNOLIA AVENUE
HOLYOKE, MASS.

Choirs wishing to participate should contact Mrs. Smith as soon as possible as the number is, of course, limited and it will be necessary to accept participants on first come, first accepted basis.

R E M E M B E R

S P O N S O R S H I P S

One dollar each - helps to assure that we will make expenses.

A N N O U N C I N G

S A C R E D D A N C E G U I L D I N S T I T U T E
J A C O B ' S P I L L O W - L E E , M A S S A C H U S E T T S

SUNDAY NIGHT, JUNE 25, 1961 THROUGH WEDNESDAY NOON, JUNE 28, 1961

PARTICIPATING INSTRUCTORS

TED SHAWN - MARY ANTHONY
AND OTHERS

PROGRAM SPECIALLY ARRANGED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF LEADERS AND PARTICIPANTS IN
SACRED DANCE CHOIRS

C O M M I T T E E

GENERAL PROGRAM CHAIRMAN:

CHAIRMAN:

MARY JANE WOLBERS, JEAN MILLER, JANET WALZ, AND RUTH MAYTON

REV. ROBERT STORER

JOSEPHINE RICE

NEWS ITEMS

CONSULTATION ON THE DANCE

The Department of Worship and the Arts of the National Council of Churches held a consultation on the dance on November 16, 1960. Meetings were held in the theatre of the Riverside Church in New York City where demonstrations by Hadassah, the Fairfield County Dance Workshop group, a choir under the direction of Margaret Fisk Taylor, Sister Jean and students from the Tuller School on Long Island, and Helen Gray's Boys Group were seen on stage in the afternoon. Speakers on the morning panel included: Ruth St. Denis and Sacred Dance Guild members: Margaret Fisk Taylor, Jean Miller, Mary Jane Wolbers. Other members to contribute to the discussion and demonstration were: Martha Odom, Ruby Henderson, Meredith Herrick, Virginia Lucke, Betty Simpson. The day's proceedings were tape recorded, and will be made available in mimeograph form from the office of:

Dr. Marvin Halverson, Executive Secretary
Department of Worship and the Arts
National Council of Churches
475 Riverside Drive
New York City

This was the first meeting of its kind sponsored by the National Council of Churches, and the interest it generated indicates that this organization is ready to take a positive role in the promotion of dance as a religious art. The Guild sincerely hopes so.

On January 1, 1961, "Lamp Unto My Feet" (also CBS TV) got off to a glorious New Year by presenting John Butler's choreography of "The Nativity". Principal roles of Mary and Joseph were danced by Carmen de Lavallade and Glen Tetley. A happier combination of choreographer and performers would be hard to find; the program was superb.

"A LIGHT FOR THE DARKNESS" PREMIERED

A new work, combining words, music and dance entitled "A Light for the Darkness" was performed on Wednesday, November 30, 1960 at St. Procopius College in Lisle, Illinois. The work was written by Fathers Alban and Mathias of the Order of St. Benedict at St. Procopius Abbey. They expressed the belief that their "Balletoric" into which abstract dance is woven, is a new art form. The production involved about 250 students, townspeople, professional singers and dancers.

PUBLICATION DEADLINE

Send news and articles for Spring "Newsletter" to Mrs. Charles Wolbers, 6 Excelsior Avenue, New Paltz, N. Y. by April 1, 1961.

WHAT OUR CHOIRS ARE DOING

Editorial Note: It would be good to have news notes from more of you about what your choirs are doing.

CENTER CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, MANCHESTER, CONN.

DIRECTOR: BETTY SIMPSON

Mrs. Simpson wrote us and told us that her choir was in preparation for the annual Palm Sunday Vesper Service with the singing choirs. Planning a presentation of parts of Maunder's Olivet to Calvary, some of which would be interpreted and some only sung.

Her Junior Choir started in January, with Seven 8th grade girls taking part. This is the fifth year she has had such a group. Designed to give the younger girls a chance for experiencing what rhythmic choir is like, it also gives them the opportunity to find out if they like it enough to want to try out for the high school group. The class spends much time during the fifteen week session on modern dance techniques which are tools for expression and coordination, and creates one "finished" interpretation for presentation as a part of a worship service in the church school.

CENTRAL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, FALL RIVER, MASS.

DIRECTOR: MRS. M. WEBB WRIGHT

This choir with only six members this year has danced several special services in other churches during the advent season and a vesper service in their own church. They participated in a Processional of the Palms in their own church and at the Union Lenten Service of Fall River Council of Churches on Palm Sunday evening.

The group is planning a special program at the request of the Fall River Symphony Orchestra to be danced in conjunction with their Spring Concert. The work of the evening will be based on a group of Negro spirituals.

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, DARIEN, CONN.

DIRECTOR: MRS. PRESCOTT FULLER

In the Fall of 1960, the dance group were extremely involved in a commissioned piece of work for the 50th anniversary celebration of Christ Church in Woodhaven, Long Island. This was a full service with nine dancers and sixteen choir members. The work, titled "You are the Third Dimension of Christmas" was a 55 minute piece. Included were seven dances and much original poetry to carry the theme along, all written and choreographed by Mrs. Fuller. The girls have worked hard and long for two years and have become quite able technicians, also are developing the creative aspects of the work.

(CONT. ON PAGE 6)

PLEASE NOTE: The National Methodist Student Conference which was to come in December has been postponed to August, 1961, at the University of Illinois. Since Illinois emphasises dance, the idea of a Religious Arts Festival will probably include the dance aspects.

WHAT OUR CHOIRS ARE DOING (CONT)

MRS. FULLERS GROUP (CONT. FROM PAGE 5)

Mrs. Fuller writes: "I was busily engaged in writing and choreographing a lanten service. I molded, wrote, weeped and wrenched this nothingness into being. Grueling work, I knew you understand. The new work was entitled 'This Cross is Mine'. The title speaks for the work, the reality of the cross being the focus of the entire piece of work. The blindness of contemporary man, and a prayer for the light is the first piece of work, music is being composed for this. The fragments of the cross is second and the music was from the Marcel Dupree organ work. One dance with spoken word was concerned with the alienation of man from God. The wholeness of God or reconcilliation. We involved members of the audience in movement on the Arc of God's love. This piece of work was prepared for one of four lanten services in the town of Darien in cooperation with four churches. As part of lent related to the Arts, we felt the great responsibility to this program and were very much honored being asked to contribute."

WHAT OUR MEMBERS ARE DOING

Jeanne Fuller

Virginia Wagner

Leda Canino

Margaret Fisk Taylor

Huguenot Dance Choir, New Palz, N. Y. under the
direction of Mary Jane Wolbers

Jeanne Fuller writes of summer teaching, introducing religious dance to Chatauqua, N. Y. She conducted two classes daily for eight weeks, three workshops and nine services were danced by Mrs. Fuller and her daughter Susan. During the Advent Season, her sacred dance group performed a program of new works in Jamaica, Long Island, Darien, Conn. and over TV out of Stanford for the Council of Churches.

Leda Canino has done two worship services in dance for 100 children of the White Plains Community Church (Unitarian). On Jan. 10, she gave a lecture-demonstration, "The Creative Dancer, Revealer of Spiritual Truth", for the Women's Alliance of that church in White Plains, N. Y.

Virginia Wagner's daughter Wini has appeared on TV over WRCV, Philadelphia in a program geared to children called "Enter His Gates". She assisted in the aforementioned "Worship '61".

The Huguenot Dance Choir of New Palz, N. Y. under the direction of Mary Jane Wolbers are preparing a program of dances on women of the Bible. This group has also been seen in the Philadelphia area over WFIL TV on "Worship '61", a program in that station's series, One Nation Under God.

Margaret Fisk Taylor was in Washington, D. C. for 9 days of training in rhythmic choir and children's work, sponsored by the Washington Council of Churches, last October. She was also involved in programs for an Episcopal women's group and an Ohio University vesper service at Christmas time. On Jan. 31 she did a program, Worship Through Symbolic Movement as a part of the Religious Arts Festival at the First Community Church in Columbus, Ohio followed by a program on Feb. 8 for the Faculty Wives of Ohio University and teaching Feb. 14 & 15 at the Christian Education

(MARGARET FISK TAYLOR - CONT. FROM PG. 6)

Conference in St. Louis, Mo.

REPORT OF SACRED DANCE GUILD REGIONAL WORKSHOP - SCHENECTADY, N. Y. -
OCTOBER 15, 1960 (CONDENSED FROM REPORT OF MARY JANE WOLBERS)

51 participants shared in the training, fun and spiritual fellowship of a day of planned activity. Included were: Training by Sacred Dance Guild member, Leda Canino; Solving of a choreographic problem under the direction of another member, Martha Odom; Discussion of "Spiritual Preparation of the Dance Choir" by Shirley Porter and a vesper service.

In the summary of her session, Mrs. Canino says: "So that the creative dancer can truly become a revealer of spiritual truths, an entirely new way of teaching dance language must be evolved. Important thoughts initiate and must propel dance movement so that the mind's image can become truly realized through the visualization of concept."

Martha Odom said of her session: "The afternoon session was the presentation of a choreographic problem in an attempt to allow participants to realistically define the limits within the chancel area and create worshipful dance interpretation suitable to the Christmas carols."

Of the session on "Spiritual Preparation of the Choir", Shirley Porter says, "Spiritual Preparation is as necessary for a dance choir as physical preparation. It prepares the dancer to take a more meaningful part and to experience a greater calm and singleness of purpose."

A vesper service was held in the sanctuary of the First Reformed Church at 5:00 pm. Arrangements were by Mrs. Porter and the Rev. Lloyd Dunham. Participants were: Mr. Dunham, Mrs. Canino, The Huguenot Dance Choir of New Palz, N. Y., Storrs Congregational Church Rhythmic Choir - Storrs, Conn., First Reformed Church Sacred Dance Choir - Schenectady, N. Y. and Mary Jane Wolbers, soloist.

In her evaluation, Mrs. Haile said, "I wish to point out definite reasons why the workshop was so worthwhile. It was made clear what is meant by 'Sacred Dance' through functional experiences; one being the choir performances in the vesper service. Another was consideration of the limited space which exists in most churches - what the aisles, exits, and immovable furniture mean to sacred dance. Third, spiritual preparation of dancers and leaders whenever sacred dance is being undertaken."

Appreciation was expressed for the hospitality of the First Reformed Church in Schenectady which provided all the facilities for the day, for the assistance of Evelyn Hanna, the Rev. Lloyd Dunham and their local committee.

In the January 1961 motive, Fred Gealy says, "At some point in every Christian worship service there must be for everyone some encounter with the holy. It may be in prayer or scripture or sermon, in hymn or anthem; ..."May we humbly add sacred dance to the list? (Page 13; article entitled, "What do we do when we worship?").

REPORT ON THE REGIONAL WORKSHOP AT WINCHESTER

On October 15 a regional workshop was held in the Unitarian Church in Winchester, Massachusetts under the direction of Jane Renz, Josephine Rice, Helen Borngesser and Robert Storer.

It was a helpful and well-attended occasion. The morning was spent in sharing ideas and observations. Small groups worked experimentally during the noon hour. In the afternoon a workshop session was held under the direction of Mrs. Visvaldis Paukulis. Mrs. Paukulis (Shirley) was modern dance instructor at the Boston Y.W.C.A. Last year she directed the chancel choir at Marsh Chapel at Boston University. This was a most profitable session for all who participated.

An executive meeting was held late in the afternoon.

A WORD ON BEHALF OF THE NEXT EDITOR!

It would be exceedingly helpful to future editors of the Newsletter if everyone would make an effort to get material in early; to be sure that it was complete as to time, costs, locations, etc.; and to avoid the confusing duplication of having material arrive from two people!

BIBLIOGRAPHY

This bibliography is supplement to the Wolbers' bibliography issued a year ago.

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Note also: Miss H'Doubler's Dance a Creative Art Experience is now available in paperback format: Madison, Wis. U. of Wis. Press

Intravaia, Toni - "Motion is a Sacred Thing" Altar and Home, 1960, July, vol. 27, no. 7, pg. 24

Laurila, Helen - "Religious Expression Through Dance" International Journal of Religious Education, 1960, Oct., Vol. 37, no. 2, pg. 10

Lodge, Cosette - "Gods of Man" motive, 1953, Feb., Vol. 13, No. 5, pg. 24

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Change of address for information and publications:

Margaret Fisk Taylor
33 North College St.
Athens, Ohio

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Audio-Visual Aids

"Worship Through Rhythmic Movement" - 2 hymns performed in chancel of Plymouth Congregational Church, Minneapolis, Minn. by the Macalester College Choir. 16 mm., 12 min., sound and color. Intro. by M. F. Taylor. Distributor: W. W. Witt, Artcrafters, 1237 Verdugo Blvd., La Canada, California. Rental: \$5.00

"Therayattam" documentary of dance worship in South India; natives perform before a shrine. Narration blended in with movement. 16 mm., 18 min., sound and color, imported from Bombay. Dist.: Film Images, c/o Rosalind Kossoff, 1860 Broadway, New York

"A Time to Dance" educational film series made for TV, available for rental from: NET Film Service, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana. 9 programs in all; each 16 mm., 30 min., black and white, sound; \$4.75 for rental period of five days.